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FORWARD TO BARBARISM

By WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

> "The Laws and manners of modern nations protect the safety and freedom of the vanquished soldier; and the peaceful citizen has seldom reason to complain that his life or even his fortune is exposed to the rage of war . . ." Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

THIS OBSERVATION OF GIBBON, reflecting the spirit and practice of the eighteenth century, when wars were fought by small professional armies for limited aims, and when certain restraining and humanizing rules were generally observed, is a terrific indictment of war as it was waged in the middle of the twentieth century. Indeed there could be no more devastating exposure of the fallacy of the inevitable and automatic progress of civilization than an application of Gibbon's remark to what has been taking place in the conflicts of our time.

"Protection of the safety and freedom of the vanquished soldier . . ." How distant and faraway this ideal sounds as one reads the documented story of hideous maltreatment and systematic torture of American and other war prisoners in North Korea. And this is only one episode in a larger process that could fairly be called: Forward to Barbarism.

One of the greatest of Hitler's crimes, that was also a major political blunder, was the starvation of many of the hordes of Soviet soldiers who surrendered to the Germans in the first months of the war. Many of these men surrendered voluntarily or with only token resistance. Their inhuman treatment was an important factor in stiffening Red Army resistance in the later phases of the war.

There were also appalling lapses from proper standards of treatment of prisoners on the other side. The Soviet Union was the principal offender. The majority of the Italians who were captured in Russia perished there. There is a discrepancy running into many hundreds of thousands between the number of Germans and Japanese known to have been captured by the Red Army and the number who eventually returned home.

The detention of prisoners as slave laborers after the end of hostilities, an outrageous violation of humanitarian conventions supposed to govern the treatment of prisoners, was practiced in France and Great Britain, as well as in the Soviet Union.

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GIBBON'S "PEACEFUL citizen who has seldom reason to complain that his life or even his fortune is exposed to the rage of war" has ceased to exist in our time, especially in countries which are vulnerable to attack from the air, as almost all countries now are. It was the "peaceful citizens," the women and children, the noncombatants who were protected under the old relatively humane rules of war, who often met death in the most terrible forms during the last war.

A common doom engulfed hundreds of thousands of "peaceful citizens" of Hamburg and Dresden, London and Coventry, Berlin and Cologne, Warsaw and Rotterdam, with atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the climactic blows of the new total war which threatens to become a contest in unlimited annihilation. The fortunes of noncombatants, reasonably secure in Gibbon's time, often went up in smoke during air bombings or were destroyed in postwar inflations or taken by direct pillage and confiscation. Gibbon, like other historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thought he was describing events of a remote past which could never happen again, when he recorded the sack and destruction of cities by the Goths and Vandals, the carrying off of populations into slavery, the execution of leaders of the defeated side in a war.

But there have been many parallels for such developments in our own time. And the modern capacity for destruction far exceeds that of the old hordes of barbarian invaders. They lacked even gunpowder and dynamite, to say nothing of the resources of the "blockbuster bomb" and its more formidable successors, the A-Bomb and the H-Bomb.

One need not idealize or romanticize the wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to recognize that one finds in these wars no precedent for the cold-blooded massacre of some fifteen thousand Polish war prisoners by the Soviet authorities in the Katyn Forest and elsewhere. Nor is there anything in the record of Imperial Germany that is comparable to the deliberately planned extermination of people of the Jewish faith or race by the Nazis. As one shrewd German intellectual once remarked to me: "Hitler's Germany really was what your World War I propaganda falsely represented the Kaiser's Germany to be."

There was little to recommend the Tsarist system in Russia by the standards of western peoples living under free institutions. But in the annals of modern Tsarism there is nothing to compare in horror with the "liquidation of the Kulaks as a class," the state-organized famine of 1932-33 or the gigantic system of slave labor camps set up under the Soviet regime.

There has never been a war aftermath that uprooted so many people from their ancestral homes, that created so many unjust and impractical demarcation lines. It was generally considered an injustice when Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War. But it is worth remembering, as a sign of how grave the advance toward

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barbarism has been in the twentieth century, that the people of Alsace-Lorraine were left undisturbed in their homes and possessions.

If Alsatians were willing to become German subjects they could carry on their former occupations. If they preferred to move to France they could realize the fair market value of their property. Their fate seems very easy, compared with that of the nine million people who formerly lived in the German provinces east of the Oder-Neisse rivers and the three and a half million people of German stock who had lived for centuries in the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia. These people were driven from their homes with nothing but what they could carry on their backs; if they escaped murder or death from cold, exhaustion and starvation the best they could hope for was to begin life from scratch in an overcrowded Germany. Forward to Barbarism.

THE ORDEAL OF THE six thousand American prisoners who were murdered, starved, maltreated, often deliberately and brutally tortured by the North Koreans and Chinese, under Soviet direction, must have brought home to many individual American families the ominous advance toward barbarism. Of course it was seldom a pleasant experience to be captured by primitive and savage enemies, such as Apache Indians or tribesmen on the Northwest Frontier of India.

But there were refinements of cruelty in what was done to the American prisoners. Apaches or Pathan tribesmen might torment prisoners out of revenge or for the sake of inflicting pain. But the experience of the Americans in Korea who were tortured for the purpose of extracting detailed false "confessions" of waging germ warfare is the first of its kind. Another sinister horror in the Communist technique is the brain-washing, the attempt by a combination of psychological and physical pressures to destroy the will and the capacity to resist of the prisoner, to reduce him to the condition of a soulless robot.

What happened to most of our prisoners, although shocking, is not news to those who have followed their plight closely. Some two years ago Colonel James Hanley, in the Judge Advocate's Department, made public facts and figures remarkably similar to those which the Pentagon has now officially confirmed. That was a time when belief in peace through appeasement was still strong — and Hanley was roundly criticized for failing to spare the feelings of the murderers and torturers.

But the known fate of our prisoners certainly cuts the ground from beneath the argument that the feeble and unworthy compromise which was finally agreed on (turning over the anti-Communist Chinese and North Korean prisoners to a so-called neutral commission which included the Communist governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia) was necessary for the sake of our own men in enemy hands. It is inconceivable that the Communists could or would have treated their prisoners worse if we had unconditionally released all *bona fide* anti-Communist Chinese and North Korean prisoners.

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The fact that the vast majority of these men stood up so staunchly under the mental torment of prolonged Communist "persuasion" efforts does not excuse the ordeal to which they were subjected. It is obvious from what happened in North Korea that the treatment of prisoners in Communist hands will not be governed by any rules of decency or humanity. A principle from which we should never deviate in the future is that no *bona fide* refugee from Communism, in peace or in war, should ever be handed back or subjected to the kind of ordeal that went on at Panmunjom.

THE ADVANCE TOWARD barbarism, symbolized in the fact that modern wars have become steadily more ruthless and more indiscriminately destructive, is a result of three principal causes.

First, science itself, impersonal and amoral, has increased the possibilities of devastation in proportion as it has enlarged the area of constructive activity. The tank was made possible by the automobile. The bombing plane is the brother of the passenger aircraft which has done so much to reduce the obstacles of time and space. Atomic energy can be used as a valuable new source of power— or as a means of appalling destruction.

Second, a feature of the twentieth century has been the growth of fanatical totalitarian ideologies which turn peoples into armed camps of robots and set world domination as their ultimate goal.

One consequence of this has been the unleashing in America and throughout the world of Communist fifth columns, devoted to undermining the integrity and security of the countries in which they operate. It is the belated American awakening to this new fifth column danger that is so inanely disparaged with such familiar left wing cliches as "witch hunt," "Red baiting," "hysteria," etc.

Third, man's brain has expanded out of all proportion to the growth of his mind and his soul. There has perhaps never been such an ominous gap between what humans have it in their power to inflict on each other and the element of moral consciousness and self-restraint.

There is a gap, at once tragic and ironic, between what scientific invention could make possible and what it actually achieves. The few excellent radio programs are heavily outweighed by others which seem to have set the middle grade moron as their target. The facilities for communicating music and literature to a wide audience are unrivaled. But what kind of music and literature is being written?

It is useless to dream of turning back the march of science. This would be impossible, even if it were desirable. The crack-up or the softening of totalitarian societies and habits of thought, the raising of man's moral and cultural stature to the level of his material achievement — these are possible goals. But their accomplishment is not easy or simple.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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In The Mayflower: There's little change evident these days in the dining room of Washington's most famous hostelry — at least at lunch time.

Seen lunching together on Friday, May 21, were Mr. Louis Johnson, former Secretary of Defense, under Truman and Mr. Max Rabb, at present Secretary to President Eisenhower.

Johnson, now a practicing attorney in Washington, was once Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Democratic Party and still rates as one of that party's big guns. Rabb during the 82nd Congress was secretary to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., but emerged from the Senator's defeat to become a White House Secretary. For some time, he has been in charge of "minority problems," hence got his nickname "the David Niles of the Ike regime." (Niles, a protegé of Frankfurter, was in charge of "minorities" under Roosevelt and Truman.)

Rabb steered the amendment of the McCarran-Walter immigration law last year which was designed to admit some 200,000 additional immigrants. More recently, he was elevated to a new position (of which little has been said publicly), "Secretary to the President's Cabinet."

Currently, Rabb is linked with that interesting White House conference which took place on January 21, when the decision was taken to make preparations for the Army's complaints about McCarthy, Cohn and Schine. At that conference was Rabb's former boss, Senator Lodge, now Ambassador to the UN. Why our envoy to that global organization was needed in a conference dealing with the Cohn-Schine affair has not been disclosed. But it is recalled that Lodge bears no love for McCarthy since his defeat at the polls in '52, for the Wisconsin Senator refused to campaign for his colleague. There are many followers of McCarthy in Lodge's home state of Massachusetts.

The meeting of January 21 (proceedings of which the President has kept secret from the Senate committee) was called together by Max Rabb, it is reliably reported.

This interesting panorama in the dining room recalls how Franklin D. Roosevelt, when President, used to send his secretaries to lunch in this and other restaurants in Washington to observe who was lunching with whom in the political scene. But it is not recalled that any of the FDR secretaries were lunching with prominent members of the GOP.

Finally, a peek into the White House. We hear that the President in recent months has had three rather frequent visitors — John J. McCloy, General Lucius Clay and his own brother, Dr. Milton Eisenhower. McCloy is now Chairman of the Chase Bank, but is remembered here for (among other things) the fact that when Assistant Secretary of the War Department in 1944-45, he provided the legal apology for allowing known Communists to obtain commissions in the Army. Clay is now the Chairman of the Board of Continental Can, a Goldman-Sachs outfit, and has been active on letterhead committees against the Bricker Amendment. Brother Milton, college president, was prominent in Henry Wallace's Department of Agriculture in the Triple-A days when Alger Hiss was there and for several years during the war served under Elmer Davis in the pink-tinged Office of War Information.

Time for a change!

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In Capitol Corridors: We hear of at least a dozen GOP Representatives from the Middle West who are "going it alone" in the fall elections, want no White House blessing and — many of them — will be sharply critical of the White House in their campaigning. Rep. Paul Shafer, of the 3rd Michigan District, doesn't go that far, but he has told his constituents who voted for a change in '52, he'll support all Administration policies working for a change; and he'll oppose all Administration policies that do not do so.

● There is talk again about Ike's retiring in 1956, as a result of the prediction (*New York Times*, May 20) by William H. Lawrence, *New York Times* correspondent in Washington, that President Eisenhower would not seek re-election in 1956. The President, he said, found the job "much too big and too irritating." Result of this talk is to spur more Representatives to run "independent."

● In general, Republicans are mournful, Democrats hopeful, about election prospects. One factor alone, they say, would ensure a Democratic landslide: entrance into the war in Indo-China. GOP senators are gloomy as a result of circulation of a draft copy of a resolution asking Congress for Presidential stand-by controls and a free hand to make war in Southern Asia. The draft was circulated by White House favorites.

● During Truman's last trip to Washington, the story got around that the former President is angry with Eisenhower. The reason is that Truman sought an interview with Eisenhower when the President was last in Kansas City. The "man in Independence" could not get an appointment.

● Much discussion of an article (May 22) in the *Christian Science Monitor*, reporting that the "Joe Must Go" stunt, staged by a small town Wisconsin editor to recall McCarthy, has bogged down. The article reports that $7,000 of the $17,000 raised for the movement came from Los Angeles and "other large amounts" came from New York. The *Monitor* has been unsympathetic to McCarthy.

Senators and Representatives who have toured districts and sections of the country report that pro-McCarthy sentiment (contrary to the last Gallup Poll assertions) is on the increase.

● Senator Margaret Chase Smith is said to be worried about her campaign for GOP renomination (which in Maine means re-election). A McCarthy friend, Robert L. Jones, is contesting the Smith candidacy, despite the fact that "Snow White" (as she is dubbed) enjoys strong organization support. A hot race is anticipated.

● Midwestern Republicans boost Clarence Davis, Solicitor of the Interior Department, for the vacant post of head of TVA. Davis, no friend of "public power," hails from Nebraska, backed Taft in 1952.

● Rep. Carroll Reece certainly grasped the nettle this week when he opened his probe of foundadations and their work for socialism. How important the leftists deem this investigation is seen in the furious (but skillful) attacks on the committee in the leftist columns and by the Democrats on the committee.

"Equal Educational Opportunities": Implied in the Supreme Court decision on segregation is a thought that Negroes should resent. The thought is that white schools are superior simply because they are attended by whites, that Caucasians are inherently of a higher intellectual type and that contact with them is essential to the "equal" education of Negroes. This slur on the Negro is implicit in the dictum that, unless he is integrated with the white, he is not afforded "equal educational opportunities." Will the Negro accept this legal pronouncement of his inferiority?

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There was a time when the Negro boxer would get a bout with a white man only if he agreed to lose. This blatant indecency was overcome not by a court order or by a legislative act. The superior ability of a Joe Louis made him an attraction of such potency at the "gate" that discrimination could not withstand. And Jackie Robinson opened the way for Negro ball players by skill, not by recourse to the law.

The difference between professional sports and public schools lies in the fact that one is in the realm of private enterprise and the other is a government monopoly. In the first case, the judgment of the buying public acts as the determining factor; in the second, the buying public has very little to say. If schools were privately supported, the superior qualifications of superior Negroes would break down the traditional barriers against the race automatically and without creating resentment; the better student would be acclaimed without regard to race. The effect of the Court order is not only to imply a slur on the Negro, as a race, but also to cause resentment of the whites (expressing itself in evasions of the court order and harsh personal discrimination against the Negro) because the Court has declared their attitude on segregation an evidence of immorality.

The decision of the Supreme Court is, in effect, sumptuary law — which is never enforceable, because it runs counter to public opinion; its repercussions will be many and of long duration.

Tanks: The Army has brought out for public viewing the long secret T-43, rated as the mightiest armored vehicle in the nation's military arsenal. From its pictures it certainly looks to be a monster, but some wonder what it is for. Unless we are going to fight Russia on land why throw billions away on expensive tanks as has already happened in the war mobilization program? And if we are going to attempt to fight Russia on land the sooner Americans know what is in store for them, the better.

Russia today has some 230 divisions under arms counting satellite divisions. But in her active reserve she could in a short time call up 300 more divisions. NATO has 25 active divisions along the Rhine with which to oppose Russia and 25 in reserve which are not battle worthy. There is no use counting in the troops of Greece and Turkey or those of Yugoslavia which the State Department invariably does in giving a false picture of NATO's real effectiveness. If Russia strikes it will be through Germany and it is at this point that she would have to be stopped. The troops of Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia will all be kept at home pinned down by Red divisions. At this critical point — the Rhine — there are only 25 active NATO divisions, 6 of which are American. The French General Juin who commanded NATO ground forces said not long ago that Russia could take Paris in 23 days.

Military observers ask some questions. Could our ground forces make any difference? In the last war we had eighty-nine divisions overseas. How could we get even a reasonable share of this number into France without inviting an immediate strike by Russia? And if we got *all eighty-nine, NATO forces would still be hopelessly outnumbered by Russia on the ground.* In addition, the Russians have overwhelming superiority in the air over NATO. In short, why tanks?

TV Front: That Robert Montgomery program comes under fire because of its presentation entitled "Sky Block," of Monday, May 17th. It seems to be all about subversives hidden in a mountain where they had certain instruments designed to control weather conditions. An Army engineer is the stout hero told off to foil them. An FBI agent, who wanted to screen some locals applying for jobs in the project, is cast as a sort of "boob." The Army Colonel gives the FBI man a lecture to the effect that he is not interested in men's pasts, what they were ten years ago is not important, etc. The slant — so TV watchers report — was definitely against the FBI character and the FBI in general. Is Montgomery imbibing too large a dose of the White House "liberal" antagonism against pursuing Reds in Government? Some think so and are letting Montgomery and his sponsor (Johnson's Floor Wax) know their sentiments.

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But We Were Born Free, by Elmer Davis, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.25. Reviewed by Victor Lasky.

Somehow Elmer Davis has achieved a reputation as a radio-TV commentator of outstanding moderation and phlegmatic calm. Perhaps it's because he is blessed with a voice that is twangy and humorously skeptical. He *sounds* as if he's making good sense while discussing the issues of the day.

His new book, a collection of odds and ends he's published in such places as the *Saturday Review* and the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin,* is mainly a regurgitation of the now all too familiar egghead litany of the horrors of living in the same country with a senator named McCarthy. According to Davis, the schools, newspapers, churches, the libraries — almost anything you can think of — are now under savage assault by the junior Senator from Wisconsin, aided and abetted by a nationwide network of "primitives" and "heresy sniffers."

"Don't let them scare you!" he warns. "Say what you think! Love what you love! Despise what seems wrong to you! And don't let them scare you!"

Since that's what the man said, I'm going to follow Elmer's advice and not let *him* scare *me!* Scaring people as a matter of fact, is a Davis specialty. Witness this from the book:

> "I do not think that Stalin could have licked us; I do not think that whoever now may be running Russia can lick us. But McCarthy and the spirit of McCarthyism could lick us . . . by getting us to fighting among ourselves like the Romans, by persuading every man that he must keep on looking over his shoulder, to make sure that the man beside him doesn't stab him in the back."

And here's another:

> "I regret that I have to mention McCarthy; I regret that he exists. But he does exist and not to mention him would be as if people in a malarial country refused to mention the anopheles mosquito. There is a quinine that can neutralize his venom; it is called courage."

To Davis, of course, "McCarthyism" means *any* effort to expose Communist infiltration, even when not under the Senator's aegis. Davis has particularly harsh words for the Senate Internal Security subcommittee headed by Senator Jenner. He accuses the subcommittee, formerly headed by Senator McCarran, of "relentlessly persecuting" Owen Lattimore, Davis' old pal in the OWI — a fact of friendship he neglects to mention.

It is not surprising that the left wing brethren strategically placed in leading book review media, are now loudly beating the logrolling drum for Elmer Davis' tome. Most of the reviews I've read comment on Elmer's "courage" in doing the book. R. L. Duffus, for example, gushing in the *New York Times Book Review,* acclaims Elmer as "representing a tradition of courage . . . He is in favor of freedom of the mind."

Dick Rovere, writing in the *New Leader* a couple of years ago, pointed out that attacking McCarthy was as dangerous as drinking a cup of coffee; that he, personally, was assailing the Senator all the time. No one stops him. And no one is stopping Davis, either.

Duffus, a *Times* editorial writer, also states that "it would be a bold investigator who would dare put Mr. Davis on the stand in the hope of intimidating him."

I've got news for Duffus. Davis was put on the stand on November 11, 1952, at which time he admitted that, as head of the OWI, he had misled the American people when he broadcast in 1943 that the Nazis had been responsible for the barbaric murder of 19,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. Davis testified before a special congressional committee that now he is "convinced they were killed by the Russians."

Fearless Davis still doesn't believe Harry Dexter White was a Soviet agent. ". . . There is no convincing proof that White served any government but his own," he writes in his book. Elmer said the same thing in 1948, when he denounced the House Un-American Activities Committee as "being un-American itself" for accusing Harry White. With equal vehemence that year, Fearless Davis also defended Alger Hiss as "a loyal American."

Discussing ex-Communists like Whittaker Chambers, Davis confesses his irritation with "the smug self-assurance of certain people who think that because they were completely wrong twenty years ago, they must be completely right now that they entertain diametrically opposite opinions." The trouble with Fearless Elmer is that, except when some inquisitorial heresy-sniffer gets him under oath, he hates like all get-out to admit he was ever wrong about anything. This Pharisaism is to be found particularly among former fellow-travelers like Archibald MacLeish, who has yet to apologize for his role in promoting Stalinism in the thirties. MacLeish also gushed about the Davis book in the *Nation,* declaring "the only man who hates American liberalism more than a Communist hates it is a Communist turned reactionary."

We are indeed living in a topsy-turvy world when a MacLeish can assail a Whittaker Chambers for exposing an Alger Hiss. Or when the Authors League of America can honor the memory of Richard E. Lauterbach by awarding a money prize each year to the person "who has through his writing made a substantial contribution in the field of civil liberties."

Lauterbach was one of a group of *Time-Life* correspondents who in 1945 protested Whittaker Chambers' anti-Soviet views and demanded his removal as foreign editor. Yet this pre-McCarthy "book-burner" is honored by the Authors League as a great civil libertarian! And who do you think was this year's recipient of the Lauterbach award? You guessed it — Elmer Davis.

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